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# The Swedish *nu*: a historical perspective\*

Mirja Saari and Hanna Lehti-Eklund

## 1. Introduction

The Swedish word *nu* (NU) ‘now’ seems to have had both temporal and non-temporal functions in early medieval texts. In our paper, we discuss its discursive functions along two lines: its diachronic development and the influence of language contact between Swedish and Finnish. We present a historical overview of the use of NU in Swedish, starting with medieval data and finishing with present-day usage. Concentrating on textual and pragmatic uses, we will look at the semantic and syntactic development of NU with reference to grammaticalization processes. The reason for looking at NU as a language contact phenomenon is the fact that Swedish is a pluricentric language with official status not only in Sweden, but also in Finland. The usages of NU in Sweden and Finland will be compared, and some differences and similarities will be discussed. In addition, the use of NU in the Finland-Swedish variety will be compared with the use of Finnish NYT (see Hakulinen this volume).

The historical data consists of texts that have a connection with oral tradition, the earliest being medieval provincial laws from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and a Swedish Pentateuch paraphrase from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup>, the data comprises dialogues in the Bible, which were translated into Swedish in 1541 (Gustav Vasa’s Bible, GVB), private letters, plays and narratives. The uses of NU in everyday conversations from the 1990s to the 2000s will be investigated on the basis of data consisting of dinner talks, radio shows and speakers of different age groups. In addition, examples have been collected from chat groups on the Internet. As the material has been collected from various sources and does not form a corpus, the analysis will be mostly qualitative, but some clear trends can be identified.

Our data comes from both Sweden and Finland, where Swedish has been a minority language for almost a thousand years. The proportion of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland is only 5.4 per cent (OSF 2012), but in earlier times Swedish played an important role in Finland. Because Finland was a part of the Swedish realm from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Swedish

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was used across the country for all administration, legislation and higher education. At the same time, since the vast majority of the population in Finland spoke Finnish, many people were bilingual in Finnish and Swedish, with both languages having an impact on each other (Saari 2012). The great number of Swedish loan words in Finnish is a well-known fact, and the variety of Swedish in Finland shows Finnish influence at various levels, not least the pragmatic level.

Diachronically, the temporal adverb NU referring to the temporal *origo* and meaning ‘now’ seems to show the following roughly-sketched development:

temporal > textual > pragmatic

Our hypothesis is that the development of NU shows a grammaticalization path typical of temporal adverbs developing into textual and pragmatic markers as suggested by e.g. Brinton and Traugott (2005). Still functioning as a temporal adverb in modern Swedish, NU has retained its temporal meaning over time.

In the description of the overall development, we concentrate on the textual and pragmatic functions found in our data. The following examples illustrate some of them:

(i) In one of its textual functions, NU in initial position marks a transition from one topic to another. This is a typical use in medieval provincial laws:

(1) ÖgL XXXI

**NU** latær man wighia sik mæp kunu sinne.

NU let man marry REFL PREP wife his

‘NU a man gets married to his wife.’

þa gæri hwar æftir sinum wilia of huart þerra ække minna til offærs ok  
Then give each PREP his wish PREP each them NEG less PREP offering and  
‘Then both of them according to their wish give an offering of candles

til lius æn tua örtughær.

PREP candles CONJ two örtugs

not less than two örtugs [a medieval coin].’

(ii) The textual uses of NU seem to depend on the ongoing linguistic activity as well as the syntactic environment. The following textual function is found in initial subordinate clauses where NU marks some kind of conclusion, consequence or transition to a new aspect based on or referring to what has been said or written previously:

(2) The Bible 1541 (GVB): Mark 9:49–50

Salt är itt gott ting, **Hwar nu saltet mister sijn sälto**, hwar medh skal man  
 Salt is a god thing If NU salt-DEF loses its saltness, with PREP will one  
 'Salt is good, but if NU the salt has lost its saltness, with what will ye

salta?

salt-INF?

season it?' (KJ21 Bible)<sup>1</sup>

(iii) In a pragmatic function, NU refers back to something that has been discussed earlier. In a letter to her son Walter who is a sculptor, Fredrika Runeberg comments on his fears that the Finnish Art Association will not compensate him for the material for the sculpture (group) he is working on. The clauses with NU take up something that Walter has mentioned in an earlier letter. In both cases, NU also seems to have a downplaying function; in the first clause, it is used together with negation and the particle *väl* 'probably', while the second NU shows a parenthetical use of NU in a subordinate conditional clause, ending the sentence with a doubting afterthought.

(3) Private letters (FRWR 1863)

Icke kan det **nu** väl vara så rasande att du ej skall för gruppen kunna få  
 NEG can it NU PRT be so crazy that you NEG will PREP group-DEF able get  
 'It cannot be NU väl be so crazy that you will not be compensated for the group,

kostnaden ersatt, om den **nu** blir något merklig, gruppen nemligen.  
 cost-DEF compensated if it NU becomes something successful, group-DEF namely  
 if it NU proves to be successful, the group, I mean.'

In present-day Swedish, the textual and pragmatic uses of NU have declined in the written language. To a great extent, this also applies to the spoken varieties in Sweden, whereas the pragmatic uses are common in the spoken varieties in Finland (see section 5). Functionally resembling the usage in the historical data, the use of NU in spoken Finland-Swedish can be considered an archaic feature in comparison to modern spoken Swedish in Sweden. It is our hypothesis that the archaic use of NU is strengthened by the fact that the equivalent Finnish particle NYT shows a more or less parallel use, both in terms of function and high frequency (Hakulinen and Saari 1995; Saari 1995: 92; Hakulinen this volume).

The outline of this paper is as follows: In section 2, the grammaticalization of NU is discussed with reference to theories on grammaticalization. Sections 3 and 4 include a discussion of its main textual and pragmatic uses, respectively. Section 5 concentrates on NU in modern Swedish. The main findings of the paper are summarized in section 6.

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<sup>1</sup> The modern English translations are from the 21<sup>st</sup>-century King James' version at biblegateway.com.

## 2. The grammaticalization of NU

We have hypothesized that NU has undergone a semantic and pragmatic change as a temporal adverb, gaining added textual and pragmatic meanings and functions over time. This development is considered a grammaticalization process. The factors associated with it will be discussed in this section.

Grammaticalization is defined by Hopper and Traugott (2003: xv) as “the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions”. It is, according to their view, a one-way process proceeding from lexical meanings via bleaching towards grammatical functions (see also Hopper 1991; Brinton and Traugott 2005). The semantic and pragmatic changes undergone by lexical items during grammaticalization are said to be motivated by conversational inferences (Traugott and König 1991; Traugott and Dasher 2002). The movement from concrete towards abstract meaning has also been discussed as a metaphoric process (Heine, Claudi, and Hünemeyer 1991). The analysis of the grammaticalization of NU is based on these premises: it can be regarded as a unidirectional process motivated by conversational inferences. As language contact has been investigated as a factor triggering grammatical change (Heine and Kuteva 2003), language contact between Finland-Swedish and Finnish can also be seen as a factor affecting the meaning and functions of NU in Finland-Swedish.

Although the change undergone by NU cannot be regarded as a prototypical case of grammaticalization in which a lexeme develops into a case ending, for example, it can easily be compared with other adverbials that have developed into discourse markers (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 152–189; Traugott 1995). A comparison with the eight factors that Brinton and Traugott (2005: 25–30) see as contributing to the process by which lexical items come to serve grammatical functions shows that six can be applied in the case of NU, and only two are not applicable. The relevant factors – (a) *decategorialization*, (b) *gradualness*, (c) *typological generality*, (d) *bleaching*, (e) *metaphorization* and (f) *subjectification* – will be discussed below with reference to NU. The factors (g) *fusion/coalescence* and (e) *increase in frequency* do not apply. The word NU does not show any fusion or coalescence typical of grammaticalization.<sup>2</sup> Increase in frequency cannot be analyzed because the data collected from the various sources are insufficient for a consistent quantitative analysis. A further factor, the *layering* of meanings and functions, has been regarded as

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<sup>2</sup> An example of *fusion* and *coalescence* in Swedish is the reanalysis of the reflexive pronoun *sig* into a marker of the passive or medial *-s* as in *öppna sig* > *öppnas* ‘open’.

typical of grammaticalization by Hopper (1991). According to Heine, Claudi, and Hünemeyer (1991: 223–224), the transitions between the various stages of grammaticalization show overlapping or intermediate stages, with earlier and later characteristics coexisting. As NU has retained its temporal meaning throughout the period studied until today, it also shows layering and coexists with the emerging new meanings, which also influence each other (cf. *now* in Aijmer 2002).

(a) *Decategorialization* means that a linguistic item moves from a major category into a minor one along what is called a grammaticalization path, cline or chain (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 106–115; see also Heine, Claudi, and Hünemeyer 1991: 220–225). A typical example is the English noun *hwil* ‘length of time’, developing into the conjunction *while* ‘during’ (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 107). During the process of grammaticalization, NU is decategorialized, so that, besides being a temporal adverb with the deictic meaning indicating a temporal *origo*, it develops functions as a textual marker organizing discourse and as a discourse particle in which the temporal *origo* is replaced by a subjective *origo* (Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 494, Lehti-Eklund 1990). Depending on the genre, some textual and pragmatic functions are still relevant in modern Swedish.

(b) The *gradualness* of the grammaticalization processes of NU is only to some extent perceptible in our data. A skewed distribution of genres in the oldest data probably means that only certain kinds of NU usage are found there. The textual sources from the oldest times (Early Old Swedish 1225–1375) are only represented by a few genres, such as provincial laws and some religious texts. Both the New Testament and the whole Bible were translated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and there are only some religious texts available from the Old Swedish period before 1500. Therefore, it is possible that NU in Swedish had functions other than temporal and textual in earlier times, but they are not apparent in our data.<sup>3</sup> Apart from dialogues in religious prose, genres close to the spoken language – such as plays, diaries and private letters – are only available to a greater extent from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward.

Another difficulty in determining whether the observed processes started with the temporal meaning is that some of the textual functions appear in the oldest data together with the temporal usage. Our hypothesis, however, is that NU shows the grammaticalization path shown above because in Old Swedish only textual meanings (in addition to temporal ones) are found. The earliest appearances of pragmatic functions occur during the Early Modern Swedish period (1526–1732).

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, Gothic Bible texts from the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Codex argenteus, Matthew 5–6) and an Old High German text translated from Latin around 800 (*Isidor* in Braune and Ebbinghaus 1962: 17) include uses of NU in a concluding or consequential function like (2) above. The former uses are equivalents of the Greek *οὖν* or *δε* in the New Testament, the latter of *ergo* in the Latin original of *Isidor*.

(c) *Typological generality* across languages is typical of grammaticalization processes. Brinton and Traugott (2005: 28) point out that “grammatical categories are regularly recruited cross-linguistically from similar sources”. Heine, Claudi, and Hünemeyer (1991: 257) summarize transfer patterns in which concrete meanings typically develop into more abstract ones according to a particular pattern. They claim that temporal meaning typically develops into reason/cause, condition or manner. There is some literature on the grammaticalization of adverbs referring to a temporal *origo*. In English, the temporal adverb *now* has developed similar text-structuring and pragmatic meanings to some extent (Defour 2008). According to Hilmisdóttir (2011, this volume), a grammaticalization cline for the Icelandic temporal adverb *nú* also involves the development of textual and pragmatic meanings. The semantic changes in other kinds of temporal adverbs and connectives that gain added textual and/or pragmatic meanings have been investigated in several studies, including adverbs meaning ‘during a certain time, while’ (cf. Lehti-Eklund 1990 on Swed. *emellertid*; Traugott and König 1991 on Engl. *while*). Traugott (1995) also points out that there is a tendency for pragmatic markers to develop from content adverbs (Traugott and Dasher 2002).

The semantic change in NU can be explained by the processes of *bleaching*, *metaphorization* or *metonymization* and *subjectification*. (d) *Bleaching* often indicates a development towards a more abstract meaning. Sweetser (1988: 392) describes the semantic change in grammaticalization as image schemas abstracted from the earlier meanings that are being preserved.

(e) Both *metaphorization* and *metonymization* have been discussed with reference to grammaticalization. Heine, Claudi, and Hünemeyer (1991: 70) do not see metonymy and metaphor as separate processes, but regard the gradual change from lexical meaning to grammatical function as metonymic in nature. They see the gradual transition from one stage to another as a process “whereby a given context invites a specific conceptual interpretation” (1991: 72) moving from a concrete meaning towards more abstract ones (Traugott and Dasher 2003). This kind of change towards a more abstract meaning is visible in NU in the development of the more abstract conclusive or consequential meanings from the concrete temporal one (see section 4.1 below).

(f) *Subjectification* as a tendency in grammaticalization has been discussed by Traugott. In a seminal article, she postulates three diachronic tendencies for the functional development in grammaticalization (Traugott 1989: 34–36). As the second and third tendencies are relevant for the change in path of NU, they are explained below in detail.

Tendency I: “Meanings based in the external described situation” > “meanings based in the internal (evaluative/ perceptual/ cognitive) described situation”.

Tendency II: “Meanings based in the external or internal described situation > meanings based in the textual and metalinguistic situation”.

Tendency III: “Meanings tend to become increasingly based in the speaker’s subjective belief state/attitude toward the proposition”.

According to Traugott, a typical example of tendency I is pejoration, as in *boor* ‘farmer’ > ‘crude person’. This tendency cannot be observed in NU. In tendency II, Traugott (1989: 35) explains textual meaning as “the situation of text-construction”, giving the example of the change undergone by *while* in English from ‘the time that’ into ‘during’. In tendency III, intersubjective meanings are regarded as subordinate to subjectification (Traugott and Dasher 2003: 97). In our data, both textual meanings (II) and those based in the speaker’s subjective belief (III) appear. In our description, we call III pragmatic functions.

In the following, some examples of the development of NU are discussed with reference to subjectification. The grammaticalization of NU seems to be a complex process showing interplay between a semantic change in the word, the linguistic activity, and the syntactic position and context of NU. Example (4) illustrates tendency II. In this example from a medieval law, NU initiates the clause and forms a kind of heading for a smaller section of the law (Ståhle 1958: 124–148):

(4) Medieval provincial law (around 1300) (Ståhle 1958: 125)

**Nu** ær talt vm kirkiu balk  
NU is talked PREP church section  
'NU the church law section is talked about.'

The NU referring to the external situation has changed into a discourse NU pointing to the text, while still retaining some of the meaning of the original temporal ‘now’. The initial position of NU as a boundary marker reflects its function of initiating something. Ståhle (1958: 127–128) points out that in the change from the temporal ‘now’ to ‘the next thing to be said’, the time at which something is said and the announcement that the next section is going to follow coincide. Although the Swedish laws were written down during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, they continued to be read aloud in the court of law (*ting*) because of the large number of illiterate listeners. The NU-clauses can be traced back to a time when the laws were part of an oral tradition and recited aloud during a trial.

The semantic and pragmatic development of NU can to some extent be explained by the original meaning of the deictic temporal adverb NU and by fundamental features of human interaction. The temporal NU pointing to the *origo* can be seen as a reference backward or forward, as interaction in general is both context-shaped and context-renewing (Goodwin and Heritage 1990;



Linell 2009: 73). In the textual meaning shown in example (4), NU is pointing forward to the next thing being said. However, NU also develops textual and pragmatic meanings where it refers backwards to a preceding context, making it relevant to a present statement or conclusion. In the textual sense in example (5), the writer, in a letter to his wife, defends the acceptance of a public position offered to him. The NU of the last sentence shows clearly that he is responding to his wife's previous letter. Leaving out NU would also leave out the sense of responding to a reprimand.

(5) Private letters (GALA 1809)

Det allmännas väl och hederliga mäns önskan fordrade,  
 ART public-DEF.GEN welfare and honourable man-PL.GEN wish demand-SBJV  
 'The public welfare and the wishes of honourable men demanded

att jag skulle påtaga mig denna befattning för att utestänga en slät  
 that I should PRT-take REFL this position SUBORD leave-out ART sleek  
 that I should take this position in order to avoid a glib

och farlig mans inflytelse.  
 and dangerous man-GEN influence  
 and dangerous man's influence.'

Men **om nu** Louise är missnöjd eller mindre nöjd, så har jag  
 But if NU Louise is dissatisfied or less satisfied, PRT have I  
 'But if NU Louise [the addressee] is dissatisfied or displeased then I

illa ställt till för mig sjelf.  
 badly put PRT PREP me self  
 have problems.'

The syntactic environment of NU, i.e. whether it is a main clause or a subordinate clause, and its position within subordinate clauses (initial or medial), also affects its interpretation. In example (5), the syntactic position of NU in the pre-front field of the subordinate clause is non-canonical in Swedish (cf. Auer 1996; Lindström 2006). In the canonical word order, NU is placed in the middle field (*Men om Louise NU är missnöjd*). A position directly after the subordinator in an initial subordinate clause is typical of the textual NU expressing a conclusion or consequence.

The pragmatic functions of NU illustrating Traugott's tendency III toward subjectification are several. The tendency to point backwards is retained, which can be seen as responsiveness in conversations or letter-writing, where NU as a particle occurs in reactive utterances. NU lends an utterance some non-propositional meaning. The linguistic actions can vary, with NU often being used in prompting and directives with imperatives, rhetorical questions or downplaying comment clauses. Many of these uses are now conventionalized (see section 5 below).

Example (6) shows how the linguistic action and the syntactic position together affect the interpretation of NU. In the play by Swedish author Strindberg, a wet nurse has been trying to invite a cavalry captain for dinner and calm him down. Combined with the imperative of the verb *höra* ‘listen’, NU relates backwards to her earlier pleadings.

(6) Strindberg (1888)

Amman: Å gud hvad han är barnslig. Visst är han väl sitt  
Wet nurse: Oh god how he is childish of course is he PRT POSS.PRON  
‘Oh god how childish he is. Of course he is his

eget barns far. Kom och ät nu och  
own child-GEN father come and eat now and  
own child’s father. Come and eat now and

sitt inte der och sura! Så! Så, kom nu bara!  
sit not there and sulk PRT PRT come now just  
don’t sit there and sulk! Come on! Come along now!’

Ryttmästarn: (stiger upp.) Gå ut qvinna? Åt helvete hexor!  
Cavalry captain (rises up.) Go out woman? PREP hell witch-PL  
‘Get out woman! Go to hell witches!’

(till tamburdörren.) Svärd! Svärd! ---  
(to door-DEF) Sword! Sword!  
‘A sword! A sword!’

Amman: Herr Ryttmästarn! **Hör** **nu** på.  
Wet nurse: Captain! Listen NU PRT  
‘Sir! Will you listen?’

Ryttmästarn: Ut qvinna! Genast!  
Cavalry captain: Out woman! At-once!’  
‘Get out woman! At once!’

The diversity of the pragmatic functions is illustrated in section 4.

All in all, there is a strong unidirectional tendency for the Swedish NU to develop from a temporal adverb into a textual marker and a discourse particle with pragmatic functions.

### 3. Old Swedish

The oldest non-temporal usage of NU is found in the medieval provincial laws and the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Pentateuch paraphrase where NU occurs in text-structuring functions. The laws are the oldest written texts in Swedish. Codified in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, they had existed in an oral version before

that. Although the laws were later revised as a result of the changes in society, their linguistic structure remained the same – in some cases until 1965 – recalling their oral origin.

In the medieval laws, NU structures the text in two different way. It introduces a new section of the law, functioning as a heading, or it sets the stage for a new case (example 4). As already pointed out, the tradition of introducing a heading with NU can be deduced from the oral tradition of reciting the laws aloud in court (Ståhle 1958: 127).

When introducing a new section, NU stands in initial position followed by a sentence with finite verba dicendi in the passive, mostly *tala* ‘talk’ (7a) and *säga* ‘say’ (7b). As pointed out in connection with example (1), some of the original temporal meaning also remains when NU points towards the next thing to be said.

(7a) (UL; Ståhle 1958: 125)

**Nu** ær taldær ærfþæ balkær  
NU is talk-PRF.PRT inheritance code  
‘NU will be recited the code of inheritance.’

(7b) (UL; Ståhle 1958: 125)

**Nu** six huru bøndær skulu by sin sa  
NU say-PASS how farmers shall village their sow  
‘NU will be recited how farmers shall sow their fields.’

NU is found in similar textual functions in the Pentateuch paraphrase from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, where it introduces paragraphs and structures the text into smaller sections. According to Wollin (2009), the aim of the paraphrases was to present the Bible passages in as lively a way as possible in the vernacular language. In example (8), the medieval author initiates a section with a question *Nw spøriom wi* ‘NU we are asking’:

(8) The Pentateuch paraphrase (p. 26)

**Nw** spøriom wi æn aff them. fôrmatte gudh skapa en ængil æller the som ey  
NU ask-PL we one PREP them could God create ART angel or they that not  
‘NU we are asking one of them whether God created an angel or those who

æru likamliker fôr æn han skapadhe likamligh thing  
are corporeal before he created corporeal being  
are not corporeal before he created corporeal beings’

In the example, NU has a temporal meaning and a text-organizing function at the same time. The text follows a kind of instructional model in which the teacher first asks a question and then answers it himself.

The temporal adverb NU meaning ‘at this moment’ often stands initially in a sentence or a clause. Having developed from it, the textual NU in the initial position also shows other

introductory functions depending on the genre. In medieval Bible texts, it can introduce the writer's comments on a narrative passage as in example (9):

(9) The Pentateuch paraphrase (Genesis 44:10-12; p. 192)

Stallaren swara them thæn ther silffkarit hittis mz han skal  
Governor-DEF answered them he who silver jug-DEF find-PASS PREP he shall  
'The Governor answered them, "He with whom the silver jug is found shall

æwærdelica wara min thræl / oc andre skulu vara orskulloge.  
always be my slave and others shall be blameless  
always be my servant, and the others shall be blameless."

oc æmsköt far han til at letha fran them ælsta oc swa til them yngsta  
and at-once goes he to PRT search from ART eldest and then to ART youngest  
'And he speedily goes to search among them from the eldest to the youngest;

oc mondhe ther hitta som han haffde lakt thz  
and could there find as he had put it  
and found it where he had put it.'

**Nw** æru thwænne skæl hwi iosep monde swa mykelika qwælia them  
NU are two reasons why NAME would so much torture them  
'NU there are two reasons why Joseph would torture them so much'<sup>4</sup>

In the medieval laws, NU is also used to initiate narratives that describe a hypothetical crime and its outcome. The narratives may be longer or the case may be described only in a clause initiated by NU as in (10). In *Upplandslagen* ('the law of Uppland'), for example, there is a longer narrative consisting of 13 sentences introduced by a NU-clause. The case describes a sick man who is mistakenly buried alive by a ship's crew. The narrative begins with: *Nu wärþer man siukar a skipum uti* 'NU a man is taken ill on a ship' and ends with laying out the penalty of 140 marks (Widmark 2001: 148–149). According to Widmark, this way of formulating the law resembles of the old oral narrative tradition typical of the Icelandic sagas.

Examples (10) and (1) are initiated with a NU-clause which describes the action or the topic of the case, after which the legal consequences of the action are announced. The function of the NU-clause comes close to a conditional clause, which would be the modern formulation in a legal text.

(10) (UL; Henning 1967: 135)

**NV** warder madher i öyom dräpin / thär andra öya äru vtan fori /  
NU is man PREP island-DAT.PL slain where other islands are outside

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<sup>4</sup> The translation is partly taken from the 21<sup>st</sup>-century King James version (KJ21 Bible) at biblegateway.com.

'Now a man is killed in the archipelago where there are other islands nearby.'

Thär a that skiplagit bana finna / sum öyn ligger til / innan  
there must ART.DET ship crew-DEF killer find that isle-DEF lies PRT before  
'Then the crew of the ship closest to the island must find the killer within

natt ok iamlänga / ällä botum vppi halda.  
night and as-long or penalty-DAT PRT hold  
24 hours or pay the penalty.'

According to Stähle (1958: 132), the hypothetical narrative NU-clause has both an introducing and a concluding function, signalling the end of one section and the beginning of the next. Playing down the temporal meaning, NU functions as a text-structuring device. Such clauses appear in all provincial laws in Sweden.<sup>5</sup>

The criminal code has long preserved this formula: It was still in the 1864 law, which was valid until 1965:<sup>6</sup>

(11) Penal code 1864–1965: Ch. 8

**Nu** hawa sådana hemligheter eller handlingar, som i 18. § sages, kommit till  
NU have such-PLUR secrets or acts as PREP 18 § says come to  
'NU such secrets and acts as are discussed in 18 § have become

annan persons kunskap eller i hans hand /.../ warde dömd  
other person-GEN knowledge or PREP his hand /.../ be-SBJV punished  
known to another person or in his hand /.../he will be punished

till straffarbete från och med fyra till och med sex år.  
to forced labour PREP and PREP four PREP and PREP six years  
by forced labour for four to six years.'

The textual meanings of the introductory NU, which developed in Swedish during the Old Swedish period, are no longer in use because of stylistic developments in religious and legal text genres.

#### 4. Early Modern Swedish

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<sup>5</sup> Stähle shows that when the judicial system expanded and laws were also created for complex situations, the narrative NU-clauses became important because they could explain hypothetical situations better than simple conditional clauses. NU-clauses with similar functions have also been found in Frisian laws from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>6</sup> A similar use of the Finnish equivalent NYT is found in the translation of the medieval city and country laws of the Swedish kingdom in 1609. See Hakulinen (this volume, section 2.2.2).

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, NU appears in other textual functions than the introductory ones, the earliest examples being found in the Bible translations. The earliest pragmatic functions are found in 17<sup>th</sup>-century letters and plays.

#### 4.1. Textual functions

The textual NU, found in the Bible translations and profane genres, has anaphoric functions in a text. It occurs both in main and subordinate clauses that show conclusion or consequence.

##### 4.1.1. Bible translations

In the Bible translations of 1526 (NT) and 1541 (GVB), NU has a textual function in clauses with a conclusive or consequential meaning. NU is found most often in imperative clauses and certain types of subordinate clauses, as in example (2). This function is found neither in the Old Swedish laws nor in the Pentateuch paraphrase from an earlier period. The meaning is textual since the conclusive/consequential NU is based on what has already been said; that is, it refers to the preceding discourse.

The Swedish Bible translations differ from other texts available during the same time because they are translations. The wording has probably been affected by the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, as well as Latin and several German Bible translations (Ståhle 1970: 11; Evers 1984).

In Bible translations, NU has been used in the translation of parataxis in the original Hebrew scriptures into Greek.<sup>7</sup> According to Aejmelaeus (1982: 2), the Pentateuch includes about 10,000 instances of the Hebrew (ו) in coordinated sentences. Since the word has different functions depending on its context, subordination and several particles were used in the translation (Aejmelaeus 1982: 123). In sentences with a conclusive or consequential function in GVB, the particles *οὕτως* and *δέ* seem to occur often in the Greek translation. Again, this translation was the model for the Latin version, where the equivalent particle was mostly *ergo*. These particles were often rendered as NU in the German and Swedish translations.

In its conclusive function, NU often occurs in a context where a passage ends with a moral. As Aejmelaeus (1982: 58–59) points out, it must have been important for the translators to emphasize it. In this connection, the Greek translator very often used *οὕτως* ‘therefore, thus’, one of

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<sup>7</sup> The translation was done during the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC (Dines 2004).

the most common particles in Koine at the time of the translation. In the Swedish translations, NU alone does not show conclusion in all cases, appearing together with other adverbs or conjunctions such as *så* ‘thus, therefore’. Our hypothesis is that NU is used in conclusions, making what has been said before relevant in the current context.

In example (12) from GVB 1541, the point is that everyone ought to subordinate himself to the powers above him. Since those who oppose the powers also oppose God’s order, give everyone what you owe them.

(12) GVB 1541: Rom. 13:2, 7  
 Therföre, hoo sigh setter emoot Offuerheten,  
 Therefore who REFL puts PREP power-DEF  
 ‘Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,

han setter sigh emoot Gudz skickelse. /.../  
 he puts REFL PREP GOD’s ordnance  
 resisteth the ordinance of God,

**Så** giffuer **nu** hwariom och enom thet j plichtighe ären,  
 So give NU each and everyone DEF.PRON you due-ADJ.PL are  
 Render therefore NU to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due,

Them skatt, som skatt bör, Them toll, som toll bör,  
 Those-OBJ tax who tax be-due those-OBJ duty who duty be-due  
 custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.’

In the Greek original (12a), the relation to the previous discourse is expressed by the particle *οὕτως* ‘therefore, thus’:

(12a) Erasmus 1516: Rom. 13:7  
 Ἀπόδοτε **οὕτως** πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς. Τῷ τὸν φόρον, τὸν φόρον. Τῷ τὸ τέλος, τὸ τέλος. Τῷ τὸν φόβον, τὸν φόβον. Τῷ τὴν τιμὴν, τὴν τιμὴν.

The German Luther Bible (1545) uses *nu* (12b) in a similar manner as the GVB:

(12b) Luther Bible 1546a: Rom. 13:7  
**SO** gebet **nu** jederman, was jr schuldig seid, Schos, dem der schos gebürt, Zol, dem der zol gebürt, Furcht, dem die furcht gebürt, Ehre, dem die ehre gebürt.

In later Swedish Bible translations, NU is no longer found in this verse. In the first new translation after GVB in 1883, NU was replaced by another discourse particle, *då* ‘then’, while in the Bible of

1917 NU was simply left out, and the translation of 2000, has neither *så* ‘so’ nor *då* (example 12c).<sup>8</sup>

The connection with the preceding discourse is considered to be obvious for a modern reader<sup>9</sup>:

(12c) Swedish Bibles Rom. 13:7

Bibel 1883: **Så** gifven **då** åt alla hvad I ären dem skyldiga

Bibel 1917: **Så** given åt alla vad I ären dem skyldiga;

Bibel 2000: Ge alla vad ni är skyldiga dem

NU also appears often in conditional and temporal clauses, its position being in the pre-front field directly after the subordinator. In (2), NU comes after *hwar* ‘if’ in a conditional clause. The clause introduces a sentence following the statement that salt is good and posits the hypothetical situation that salt loses its saltiness. Here, NU strengthens the hypothetical meaning of the conditional clause, and anchors it more closely in the preceding context:

(2) GVB 1541: Mark 9:50

Salt är itt gott ting, **Hwar nu** saltet mister sijn sälto

Salt is ART good thing If NU salt-DEF loses its saltness

‘Salt is good, but if NU the salt has lost its saltness,

*hwar medh skal man salta?*

with PREP will one salt-INF?

with what will ye season it?’

The position of NU in (2) is non-canonical and could therefore be regarded as a factor suggesting grammaticalization, as syntactic mobility is regarded as a factor typical of grammaticalization (Hopper 1991). In textual functions, NU is also found in different kinds of subordinated clause in profane genres (see 4.1.2 below) through the 17<sup>th</sup> into the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even in modern Swedish (5.1).

The other translations of Mark 9:50 that we have studied make the relation with the previous text more explicit by marking it with an adversative connector or conjunction. In Greek, this is *εαν δε* ‘but if’ (2a), in the German Luther Bible *so aber* ‘but if’ (2b) and in later Swedish translations *men om* ‘but if’ (2c):

(2a) Erasmus 1516: Mark 9:50

καλὸν τὸ ἅλας, **εἰν δὲ** τὸ ἅλας ἄναλον γένηται, ἐν τίνι αὐτὸ ἀρτύσεται; ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἅλας, καὶ εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις.

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<sup>8</sup> The new translations are probably based on new text editions which do not include the particle. Critical editions do not usually mention the omissions (Aejmelaeus, personal communication).

<sup>9</sup> A corresponding development of the use of particles can be seen in the Finnish Bible translations (see Hakulinen this volume: section 2.2.1).



(2b) Luther Bible 1546b: Mark 9:50

**So aber** das saltz thum wird, wo mit wird man würtzen?

(2c) Swedish Bibles: Mark 9:50

1883: **men om** saltet mister sin sälta, hvarmed skolen I återställa det?

1917: **men om** saltet mister sin sälta, varmed skolen I då återställa dess kraft?

2000: **Men om** saltet förlorar sin sälta, hur skall ni få det salt igen?

Summing up, NU in GVB refers back to something that was said earlier. Expressing conclusion or consequence, NU often appears in exhortations and conditional or temporal clauses. The temporal meaning of the deictic NU pointing to the *origo* has become bleached and changed into an anaphoric reference. The exact meaning of NU can be inferred and is interpreted as conclusive or consequential depending on the context. The use of NU is typical of the first Bible translation, whereas later versions replace the particle with an adversative conjunction. A corresponding development can be observed in the use of the Finnish equivalent NYT.

#### 4.1.2. Profane genres

As mentioned above, subordinate clauses including NU in textual uses are also frequent in profane genres from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – that is, in letters, diaries, memoirs and plays.<sup>10</sup> The initially positioned clauses can be temporal (*när, då* ‘when’), causal (*då, eftersom/efter* ‘since’) or conditional (*om* ‘if’). The position of NU varies between non-canonical, with the subordinator and NU forming a construction such as close connection (examples 2 and 13), and canonical, showing a typical syntax of subordinator + subject + NU. Despite frequent use in the past, the non-canonical constructions have not grammaticalized into new subordinators, although they can still be found in modern Swedish.

The canonical and non-canonical positions occur side by side from at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but some differences can be discerned depending on the function. The non-canonical position seems to have become rarer and is reserved for particular functions. In older Swedish, NU can stand in the non-canonical position in a clause with a conclusive, consequential or parenthetical function.

Today, the non-canonical function seems to be reserved for conclusive and consequential use,

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<sup>10</sup> In the historical *Dictionary of the Swedish Academy* (*Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* 1896–; SAOB), one of the central meanings of non-temporal NU is defined as conveying a conclusive or consequential meaning in subordinate clauses with temporal or causal subordinators. This is typical of clauses forming or including a summary. The meaning of NU is compared with *alltså* ‘thus’. SAOB (s.v. NU.adv.konj I.6) gives the following example in which NU is placed within a causal subordinate clause: *Eftersom han nu hade slutfört sitt uppdrag, ville han vila ut* ‘Since he NU had completed his mission, he wanted to rest’. According to SAOB, NU can also have a transitional meaning that refers back to something that has already been stated.

especially in *när*- ('when'), *om*- ('if) and *hur*-clauses ('how') where the subordinator + NU form an almost construction-like unity. These subordinate clauses also typically precede the main clause. Since NU in the conclusive and consequential function refers to preceding discourse that refers back to something that has been stated or that belongs to the common ground, the position of NU could reflect the proximity principle in Givón (1990), placing NU in a position as early in a clause as possible.

In a textual function, besides expressing conclusion or consequence, NU can also have a semantically somewhat bleached use of taking up something that has been said before. This function is shown in examples (13) and (14) from different contexts. In (13), from a story by Strindberg, the author uses the construction to resume the narration of an alderman.

(13) Strindberg (1882)

Håll munnen, gesäller, där ni icke har ord i laget!  
 Keep mouth-DEF journeymen where you not have word PREP group-DEF  
 'Shut up journeymen where you have nothing to say!

skrek han [åldermannen].  
 shouted he [the alderman]  
 he [the alderman]shouted.'

/.../

**När nu** denne [åldermannen] åter tog ordet,  
 When NU he [the alderman] again took word-DEF  
 'When NU the alderman resumed his talk'

If NU were left out in example (13), the subordinate clause would not point backwards in the text.

Another example referring back to preceding text is seen in (14), where NU is used to sum up what has already been said. In a letter, Magnus Stenbock, writing from the war, is telling his wife about every action he has undertaken in order to borrow more money. Summing this up in the last sentence, he starts with a question-formed conditional clause *Skulle nu allt slå fel* 'Should NU everything go wrong', making the previous discourse relevant for his conclusion with NU.

(14) Private letters (MSEO 1697)

Vil thetta allt ej hielpa, så har jag tänkt sedan att gå till  
 Want this all not help, then have I thought then to go to  
 'If all this does not help, I have thought to go to

Lantgreven av Casseell med een ödmjuk böön.  
 Count-DEF PREP Cassel PREP ART humble request  
 the Count of Cassel with a humble request.'

Skulle **nu** allt slå fel emoth förmodan är jag den olyckeligaste af  
 Should NU all hit wrong PREP expectation am I DEF.ART unhappiest-COMP PREP  
 'Should NU everything go wrong contrary to expectation, I am the unhappiest man

värden, som een min så värth och kier maka eij kan soulachera.  
world who ART my such honoured and dear wife NEG can comfort  
in the world who cannot be comforted by such an honoured and dear wife.'

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, the conclusive/consequential NU is in full use, apart from the Reformation Bible GVB, as well as in letters, diaries and narratives of various kinds. In the latter genres, NU also appears in a semantically weakened function of resuming or summing up text. Some of these expressions can still be found in modern texts, though sparsely. NU establishes a kind of platform from which the writer looks backwards, summing up the consequences for the future.

To sum up the textual functions of NU in Early Modern Swedish, it creates a connection with an earlier utterance or action by showing conclusion or consequence. A non-canonical position for the NU directly after the subordinator is syntactically typical.

## 4.2. Pragmatic functions

In developing from the textual conclusive/consequential NU towards a pragmatic particle, NU is subjectified, changing from the textual to a discourse level. The pragmatic NU preserves the anaphoric function. This can be seen as responsiveness in conversations or letter-writing where the particle occurs in reactive utterances. In general, the pragmatic NU typically takes up something that has been said earlier (Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 489). The scope of the reference is greater than the present utterance; NU can take up something across clause and utterance boundaries, as well as refer to earlier letters. Syntactically, the pragmatic NU is never positioned initially in a clause or an utterance, but has syntactic positions typical of pragmatic particles (Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 487).

The uses of NU as a pragmatic particle are diverse, depending on the activity the speaker or writer is engaged in. It functions as a contextualization cue showing the listener or the reader how an utterance is supposed to be interpreted. The word does not add to the propositional meaning of the clause and it cannot be negated. In many cases, the usage is conventionalized. In interpreting older examples, pragmatic and temporal interpretations can sometimes be difficult to separate because of their layering.

### 4.2.1. Directives, leave-taking and rhetorical questions

In directives, NU typically occurs in contexts where the speaker repeats her utterance if the listener has not shown any reaction (Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 490). Directives and requests are usually seen as initiative utterances, but the inclusion of the pragmatic NU implies that the previous context is relevant for the interpretation of the present directive (Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 489–490). In (15), from the beginning of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century play, there is an example of NU occurring in a repeated directive. The servant Ingri has tried using several questions to find out what is wrong with her young mistress Lisa, who is thoughtful and does not answer. When Ingri repeats her question the fifth time, she utters it as an appealing directive in imperative form with NU immediately after the verb, wanting to know what the young lady thinks about when walking alone in the street.

(15) Modée (1738)

Lisa. småleendes:

Lisa. smiling slightly

(-- ) jag tror, at du aldrig annat täncker eller talar om, än ung  
 I think that you never other think or talk PREP than young  
 'I think that you never think or talk about anything else than young

Karlar ock Gifftas.  
 men and marriage  
 men and marriage.'

Ingri.

Det är sant: Mina mästa tanckar gå wäl derpå ut. Men kiära  
 It is true: My main thoughts go PRT PRT PRT But dear  
 'That is true: My thoughts are mainly about them. But dear

Jungfru, **war nu** så upricktig som jag, och förlåt mig, om jag än en  
 Maid be NU as sincere as me and excuse me if I once ART  
 Lady, be NU as sincere as me and excuse me, if I once

gång tar mig den dristigheten på, at fråga Er, hwarpå I då  
 time take me DEF.ART courage PRT to ask you PRT you PRT  
 again dare to ask you, what you

täncken när I gån, så här i Er enslighet  
 think when you walk like this PREP your loneliness  
 think about when you walk like this alone.'

In example (16), the writer discusses his and his future wife's financial situation and takes up a topic which he touched upon three sentences before in his letter, namely wanting her to be able to

sell one of her houses: *Om du nu kunde sälja bara en av dina 3 gårdar* ‘if you NU could only sell one of your three houses’. The verb *höra* ‘hear’ functions as an attention-getter or appeal with NU pointing to the previous mention.

(16) Private letters (OTST 1836)

Om du nu kunde sälja bara en av dina 3 gårdar. /.../  
If you NU could sell just one of your 3 houses  
'If you NU could sell just one of your 3 houses.'

**Hör** du nu min lilla Korpunge du får ej sälja mer än en af dem  
Listen you NU my little Raven chick you may not sell more than one of them  
'Listen NU my little raven chick, you mustn't sell more than one of them  
[houses]

och dermed är jag också nöjd.  
and therewith am I also content  
and I'll be happy with that.'

In the example, the writer elaborates on his previous statement by adding that selling one house would be enough for them to live on.

With imperative clauses, NU is also frequently used together in actions like thanking or saying goodbye. Letter-writing has often been compared with face-to-face interaction (Adam 1998: 39–41; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1998). Sometimes letters are also seen as a conversation with a person who is not present. The dialogical aspects are especially relevant when starting and finishing a letter and how the other person's letter is commented on. This can be seen in examples (17), (18) and (19).

In (17), at the beginning of his letter, the writer thanks the sender for the previous letter. If a letter is seen as an utterance in a letter chain, NU can be seen as creating a connection between two utterances.

(17) Private letters (GALA 1809)

**Tack** nu på rent alfvare, lilla älskade vän, för dina bref,  
Thank NU PREP pure seriousness little beloved friend PREP your letters  
'Thank you NU my little beloved friend for your letters,

det lilla och det stora.  
ART.DEF. little and DEF. ART big  
the small one and the big one.'

In example (18), the writer ends her letter and says goodbye to the receiver. In this case, the use of NU creates a reference to the whole text, an utterance that is nearing its end. NU can be seen as tying up the goodbye of the letter that is being written.

(18) Private letters (EBMG about 1880)

Solitander var här i Kuopio, men jag såg honom ej. /.../  
Solitander was here in Kuopio, but I saw him not /.../  
'Solitander was here in Kuopio, but I did not see him./.../

**Farväl nu** du snälla kära Mandi, helsa alla bekanta från mig.  
Goodbye NU you kind dear Mandi, greet all acquaintances PREP me  
Goodbye NU kind beloved Mandi, send my love to everyone I know.'

In addition to directives and actions like thanking and saying goodbye, NU also occurs in rhetorical questions. These are typically not meant to be answered. Rather, the addressee is supposed to agree with the implications conveyed. The questions include, for example, a viewpoint shared by the speakers or letter-writers (ISK: § 1705). In example (19), Louise Linroth is writing a positive reply to a marriage proposal in her letter. In the question posed in the last two lines, as in example (18), NU refers back to the letter being written, and in this case more specifically to the content of the letter with an expectation of a shared point of view:

(19) Private letters (LAGA 1809)

Hvad har gjort mitt så hastiga beslut? Jo, min trygghet om en ärlig,  
What has made my so quick decision Yes my confidence PREP ART honest  
'What has caused my quick decision? Well, my confidence about having an honest,

pålitelig mans försäkran om en orubbelig tillgifvenhet, vars allmänt  
reliable man-GEN assurance PREP ART unshakeable devotion, whose generally  
reliable man's assurance about the unshakeable devotion of a man whose generally

goda, fasta och starka caractaire så väl förut var kjänd.  
good fixed and strong character so well earlier was known  
good and strong character was known before so well.'

Har jag **nu** ej varit upricktig, mångordig, kraftiga ord, som för en  
Have I NU not been sincere, verbose, strong words which PREP ART  
'Have I NU not been sincere, verbose - strong words which

vän bör gifva trygghet.  
friend shall give assurance.  
should give assurance to a friend?'

To sum up the pragmatic functions of NU in the uses above, it refers back to something, thus creating a connection with an earlier utterance or action. Syntactically, it is placed in positions similar to other pragmatic particles in Swedish in an initial clause in an utterance, whereas the metapragmatic and parenthetical NU, discussed in 4.2.2, is found in utterance-medial or final clauses. The functions of the different types of pragmatic NU are thus aligned with their syntactic position in an utterance.

#### 4.2.2. Metapragmatic and parenthetical comments

NU occurs often in metapragmatic and parenthetical off-record comments. Syntactically, the metapragmatic and parenthetical NU occurs utterance-medially or -finally in subordinate clauses directly after the subordinator. Thus the syntactic position is similar to the NU in the consequential/conclusive functions discussed in 4.1.2.

In metapragmatic comments, NU is found in contexts where the speaker monitors his talk, for example, by managing the topic (Hübler and Bublitz 2007: 17–18). This appears in various types of conventionalized constructions introducing topic change. In (20), from the play *Fröken Julie* by Strindberg, the servant Jean is talking about the lady of the house to another servant. After comparing her to her mother the countess, he reintroduces the original topic with an infinitive phrase (SAOB s.v. NU.adv.konj I.7.g). The function of NU in this metapragmatic topic introducer is to show that Jean is returning to a previous topic.

(20) Strindberg (1888)

JEAN: Fröken är så högfärdig i somliga fall, /.../ alldeles som grevinnan i  
Miss is so arrogant in some cases exactly as countess-DEF PREP  
'The lady is so arrogant in some cases, /.../ just like the countess during

livstiden. Hon trivdes bäst i köket och lagårn, men hon  
lifetime She thrive best PREP kitchen-DEF and cowshed but she  
her lifetime. She was happiest in the kitchen and in the cowshed but she

ville aldrig åka efter en häst; /.../ - Fröken,  
would never drive after one horse - Miss  
would never drive in a cart. /.../ Our Lady,

**för att nu tala om henne**, tar inte vara på sig och sin person.  
SUBORD NU talk PREP her takes NEG care PREP REFL and her person  
to NU talk about her, doesn't take care about herself.'

NU is also found in the other conventionalized topic introducers *vad X angår*/ *vad X beträffar* 'what X concerns' (SAOB s.v. NU.adv.konj I.6) where it is placed directly after the subordinator *vad* NU *X angår*.

In parenthetical comments, NU develops the function of playing down or questioning something the speaker/writer is expressing (Hakulinen and Saari 1995; Günthner and Mutz 2004: 88). In the comment clause in example (3) from the 19<sup>th</sup> century *om den NU blir något merklig* 'if it

NU will be successful ', the writer uses NU to take up what she wrote before, but NU also seems to invoke an interpretation of a parenthetical afterthought (cf. Peltola 1982/1983 on comment clauses).

(3) Private letters (FRWR 1863)

Icke kan det NU väl vara så rasande att du ej skall för gruppen kunna få  
NEG can it NU PRT be so crazy that you NEG will PREP group-DEF able get  
'It cannot be NU VÄL be so crazy that you will not be compensated for the group,

kostnaden ersatt, om den nu blir något merklig, gruppen nemligen.  
cost-DEF compensated if it NU becomes something successful, group-DEF namely  
if it NU will be successful, the group, I mean.'

Summing up the uses of NU as a pragmatic particle during the Early Modern Swedish period, it can be described as a discourse marker which shows that something in previous discourse is relevant to the present moment. While they retain the function of referring back in discourse, the metapragmatic and parenthetical NU show additional functions such as organizing discourse or uttering something as a parenthesis.

## 5. Contemporary Swedish

Today, NU occurs in everyday speech but is rare in written language. Since we did not base our presentation on a systematically constructed corpus, we cannot give quantitative data on this, but it is evident that the particle is on its way out of the written language. An indication of this is the modern Swedish Bible translation (Bibel 2000) from which all occurrences of non-temporal NU seem to have disappeared.

NU is used in both the Sweden-Swedish and Finland-Swedish varieties, but it is much more common in the latter. This is true of both the number of instances and the type of function. Most of the uses in the historical dictionary of Swedish (SAOB s.v. NU.adv.konj I.6–7) and in sections 3 and 4 above seem to have disappeared from present-day Sweden-Swedish, whereas they can still be found in present-day Finland-Swedish. In addition, there are some other types of NU in spoken Finland-Swedish that are not found in the historical material. We do not presume that they are new uses, but they cannot be documented in the historical material.

Even though the Swedish language norm is the same in Sweden and Finland, the spoken varieties in each country differ (Saari 1995). This can be considered typical of a pluricentric language situation (Ammon 2003). Oral communication is culturally bound, reflecting the



conventions of the local society, perhaps particularly at the interpersonal level. Concerning NU, the equivalent functions of the Finnish NYT surely support the ongoing use of NU in the Finland-Swedish variety (see Hakulinen this volume).

### 5.1. Textual functions

In present-day Swedish, both in Sweden and in Finland, NU still occasionally appears in textual use, but it seems to be more common in Finland. It occurs in the same way as in example (13) in section 4.1, having a concluding function.

### 5.2. Pragmatic functions

In this section, we start with a description of NU in functions similar to those we found in the historical material (4.2). We will then discuss some other usages which appear in contemporary Finland-Swedish conversations. The Internet now also shows many examples of the pragmatic NU.

#### 5.2.1. Directives and rhetorical questions

In directives, NU seems to occur only in the Finland-Swedish variety. Its use in a repeated directive is similar to (15) above. NU also occurs in many fixed imperative expressions which are all reactive, and the expression often has a disapproving and irritated tone (cf. ISK: § 823 about Finnish NYT). A typical example is the address *hördu nu* ‘listen NU’ which is illustrated in (16) from a play. Another example is the expression (*nå*) *sidu nu* ‘(oh) look you NU’ where the speaker is blaming somebody for what just has happened – for instance, when a glass has been broken. A reference to the temporal *origo* is perceivable but the pragmatic use of NU is evident from the pronunciation. In the Finland-Swedish variety the vowel is short in this function.

An example of a rhetorical question is the fixed expression *vem/vad sku nu int(e)* ‘who/what would NU not’ in (21). This is taken from the Internet where the writer criticizes parents who do not speak their own language to their children. The writer sums up her stance with a rhetorical question meaning that it is self-evident that all parents want the children to have it easier than their parents.

(21) <http://mymlan-marika.blogspot.fi/2012/08/sprak.html>, accessed 31.10.2012

Tycker det känns lite dumt då det finns de  
 mean it feel-PRES little stupid SUBORD there exist PRON.DEF.PL  
 'To my mind it seems a bit stupid that there are those

som "ger" bara ett språk till sina barn,  
 REL.PRON give only one language PREP POSS.PRON children  
 who "give" only one language to their children

fast ena föräldern talar ett annat språk också. Visst,  
 SUBORD one parent-DEF speaks ART another language too Sure  
 although one of the parents also speaks another language. Sure,

man beslutar ju själv hur man gör. Men **vem sku nu inte vilja**  
 one decides PRT self how one does But who will-SBJV NU NEG want  
 you decide of course yourself what you do. But who would NU not want

att barnen sku få det lättare.  
 PRT child-DEF.PL will-SBJV get it easy-COMP  
 the children to have it easier.'

NU ties the rhetorical question to the previous context, which is an evaluative comment on what another writer has said. The particle is included in a negative sentence which is a typical context for NU. As Hakulinen (this volume: section 3.3.2) points out, a negation is often dispreferred in interaction. The Finnish NYT has a mitigating function in a negative sentence and it is evident that this is also true for the use of NU.

### 5.2.2. Metapragmatic and parenthetical comments

As in 4.2.2 above, metapragmatic comments also appear with NU in modern Swedish. Comments including NU seem to mark an opinion as less sure than it would be without the particle (cf. ISK: § 824). In example (22), the speaker C declares that alcoholics have caused their problems themselves, closing her turn with the comment: *de e nu min åsikt* 'that is NU my opinion':

- (22) Heino
- 01 C: Vi behöver inte gå längre än ner ti Helsingfors  
 We need NEG go long-COMP than down PREP Helsinki  
 'We don't need to go further than down to Helsinki
- 02 ti dehär alkoholisthemme (.) där e hemskt mycket  
 PREP DEM.PRON alcoholics home-DEF there is very much  
 to this home for alcoholics (.) there is very much

03 som e helt självförvållad utav dom  
 REL.PRON is totally self-caused PREP dem  
 that is totally self-inflicted, caused by them

04 **de e nu min åsikt↓**  
 it is NU POSS.PRON opinion  
 that is NU my opinion↓'

In line 4, the speaker evaluates her own opinion which, according to Hübler and Bublitz (2007: 17–18), is a characteristic of metapragmatic comments. The evaluation closes the turn which is also marked by the fall in pitch (↓).

Many parenthetical comments have developed into fixed expressions. One example is the construction type (*eller*) *vem det nu var* '(or) who(ever) it NU was' or (*eller*) *vad han nu heter* '(or) what(ever) he NU is called' for word searching (SAG 4: 622–623). In (23), Nalle is talking about a man who had informed a traffic warden about Nalle's car, but Nalle is not sure of his name:

(23) SVESTRA (Sauna evening)

01 Nalle: han hade ilmoittaa här e nån sänhä: bil  
 he had inform-PAST PERF here is some such car  
 'He had mentioned here is a car

02 som ha parkera fel (.) å så sto: där  
 REL.PRON has park-PRES.PERF wrong and then stood there  
 which is parked wrongly and then there was written

03 någå V Karlsson eller V Andersson ↓**eller va han nu hette**  
 something NAME or NAME or what he NU call-PRET  
 something like V Karlsson or V Andersson or whatever he NU was called

By saying *eller va han nu hette*, Nalle questions the two names he has mentioned in the same line. He lowers the pitch, which is a sign of the parenthetical status of the clause. This expression type is frequent in both Sweden-Swedish and Finland-Swedish varieties. In Finnish, there is an equivalent use of NYT (SAG 4: 622–623; see Hakulinen this volume, example 31).

### 5.2.3. Other uses in everyday conversation

In the following we discuss some frequent uses of NU in the Finland-Swedish variety. Similar uses have not been found in the Sweden-Swedish material.

As we have seen in the examples above, NU usually occurs in various evaluative comments. One typical example is (24): Before a bridge game, Oskar and his wife Arja are telling their friends about their sailboat and how they are a bit worried about the mast. In line 4 Arja declares what they are going to do in case of a storm. Oskar confirms this in line 7 but seems less concerned about the situation than his wife:

(24) Bridge

- 01 Oskar: hoppas bara de int blir @storm då e masten kanske  
 hope only it NEG gets storm then is mast-DEF perhaps  
 'I only hope there won't be a storm. Then the mast is perhaps
- 02 lite ((hh) (2.3) tokit) lagad men  
 little badly fix-PAST PART but  
 a little wrongly set but'
- 03 (3.3)
- 04 Arja: om de börjar storma så far vi ti: (0.5) båten å övernattar  
 if it starts storm-INF PRT go we PREP boat-DEF and overnight-PRES  
 'if the storm starts we'll go to the boat and stay the night
- 05 där (1.1) å sätta fast masten  
 there PRT put-INF tied mast-DEF  
 there and attach the mast firmly.'
- 06 (1.1)
- 07 Oskar: #nå:# de kan vi också gö: **men int e de nu så (.) de e int den-n-f så**  
 PRT it can we also do but NEG is it NU so it is not it so  
 'well, we can also do that but it is NU not so (.) it is not it so
- 08 **farlit**  
 dangerous  
 dangerous.'

The utterance in line 7 is a kind of concluding remark in which Oskar plays down the danger of the situation. He gives his wife a response after a short pause in line 6, but the lengthened vowel in the particle *nå*: 'well' and the creaky voice are projecting disagreement, as are the later pause and faltering. Oskar finds the situation less dangerous than she does: *men int e de nu så (.) de e int den-n-f farlit* 'but it is NU not that (.) it is not den-n-f dangerous'. The evaluation has the form of a negative sentence where NU mitigates the utterance (cf. 21 above).

An evaluative comment with NU can also take the form of an imperative sentence in which the directive lacks a specific addressee but has an affective function. This sentence type is

illustrated in (25). A group of young men are discussing a Formula 1 race. In line 1 Nalle wonders why the Finnish driver Salo did not do better in the race. During the following five deleted turns the other men comment on this, after which Dan goes on defending Salo in line 13, explaining how hopeless the situation was for the driver. He ends his description in line 15 with the imperative clause, *vittu försök nu sen nä du int annars hellä: kan vända på ratten* ‘shit, you try it NU when you can’t turn the wheel anyway’. The imperative presents the speaker’s affective stance.

(25) SVESTRA (Sauna evening)

01 Nalle: de va underligt att Salo int klara sej bättre  
it was strange SUBORD Salo NEG managed REFL better  
‘It was strange that Salo did not manage better’

/.../

13 Dan: int tror ja att nån sku ha klara sej  
NEG think I SUBORD anybody would have managed REFL  
‘I don’t think that anybody would have got through’

14 men den kom (.) sivuluisua (.) å så fo: den in i den dä:  
but it came sideways and then went it ADV PREP DEM.PRON  
‘but it went sideways and then it went into that

15 jävla gropen /.../ vittu **försök nu sen**  
damn hole-DEF /.../ SWEARWORD try-IMPERAT NU then  
damn hole /.../ shit try it NU

16 nä du int annars hellä: kan vända på ratten  
SUBORD you NEG anyway NEG can turn PREP wheel-DEF  
when you can’t turn the wheel anyway’

The imperative clause in line 15 is an affective conclusion to what Dan has described in lines 13–15. NU refers back to the earlier description but is followed by the particle *sen* ‘then’ which marks the utterance as a conclusion (Hakulinen and Saari 1996: 90–91; cf. ISK: § 825). The combination *NU se(da)n* is typical of various types of additions, often parenthetical.

The particle chain *NU se(da)n* also occurs in follow-up questions in everyday conversation. In example (26), the men engage in a jocular word-play sequence on two English expressions, *stand-by* and *stand-in*. In line 1, Nalle calls himself a *stand-by* correcting this to *stand-in* in line 3. He marks the noun as uncertain with the question-formed word search marker *va heter de* ‘what do you call it’. By responding with *whatever* in line 4, Nicke treats this as an actual question, and after him Dan laughingly confirms in line 5 that Nalle is a *stand-by*. All the participants laugh, after which Lasse in line 7 poses a second question including *NU sen*:

(26) SVESTRA (Sauna evening)

01 Nalle:    Macke sovä: nu så ja e stand-by  
               NAME    sleeps now so I am stand-by  
               'Macke is now sleeping so I am a stand-by'

02 Dan:     \*jåå\*  
               'yes'

03 Nalle:    stand-in (.) va heter de  
               stand-in    what call-PRES it  
               'a stand-in (.) what's it called'

04 Nicke:    whatever

05 Dan:     \*du e stand-by\*  
               'you are a stand-by'

06 All:      ((laugh))

07 Lasse:    **va betyder de nu sen**  
               what mean-PRES it NU then  
               'what does that NU mean then'

08 Nalle:    whatever

Lasse uses *NU sen* to upgrade the first question in line 3, asking 'So what does *stand-by* mean then?' NU marks the second question as a follow up and *sen* marks it as a conclusion. Repeating Nicke's answer *whatever* in line 4, Nalle ends the sequence by joining Nicke and Dan in the joking mode.

In section 5.2.1 we mentioned that NU occurs in various fixed imperative expressions. In addition, there are many examples of fixed exclamations, comments, complaints and speculations which include NU and have equivalents in the Finnish use of NYT (Hakulinen and Saari 1995: 489; Hakulinen 1998: 83–84). Among these is the emphatic response *nu e de nu underligt* 'sure it is NU odd', i.e. 'it is really odd' which also appears with swear words. An example of this is (27), where Milla is quoting her friend Annika who is furious about a girl who has her eyes on Annika's boyfriend Pelle:

(27) SVESTRA (Sauna evening)

01 Milla:    så börja hon å sparka Pelle under borde (.) i    fötterna /.../  
               then started she PRT kick    NAME    under table-DEF    PREP foot-DEF.PL /.../  
               'then she started to kick Pelle's feet under the table /.../'

02 →        å Annika va helt    nå @**nu e de nu satan**@ /.../ Annika sitter breve:  
               and NAME    was totally PRT PRT is it NU satan /.../ NAME    sits    beside  
               and Annika    was like well @what NU hell@ /.../ Annika is sitting beside

03            å å hon e helt @ÄÄH ÄÄH@ ((laughter)) \*försöker poka Pelle där\*

and and she is totally ((laughter)) try-PRES hit-on NAME there  
 and and she is like @ÄÄH ÄÄH@ ((laughter)) \*trying to hit on Pelle\*

The quote which is pronounced with altered voice quality is an outburst by Annika, *nu e de nu satan* ‘sure it is NU satan’ in line 2:<sup>11</sup> The occurrence of NU in the quote shows that Milla is treating Annika’s exclamation as a reaction to a repeated action. This use can be compared to (13) above where NU occurs in a repeated imperative. As in (13), the temporal meaning of NU is perceivable.

To sum up the main points of section 5, NU is widely used in Finland-Swedish conversations but usually only in fixed expressions in the Sweden-Swedish variety. The non-temporal NU is primarily a pragmatic particle, but there are also examples of textual use. The pragmatic NU is a typical feature of spoken language and in particular of everyday conversation. It occurs in *reactive* utterances, which are most often comments on and evaluations of what has been said. These utterances are often negated parenthetical or rhetorical sentences and the speaker does not expect a reaction to them. NU marks an utterance as less sure, and in negative sentences it plays down or mitigates the proposition. NU often occurs in a particle chain together with *se(dan)* ‘then’, marking an utterance as a conclusion. In fixed expressions, particularly in imperatives and exclamations, the temporal meaning of NU is perceivable.

## 6. Summary

The Swedish NU has shown many non-temporal functions throughout its history, developing from temporal to textual and pragmatic meanings. At the same time, the temporal meaning of the adverb *nu* is retained. Starting with the oldest non-temporal usage, NU is found in text-structuring functions in the medieval provincial laws and the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Pentateuch paraphrase. The initial NU is used to introduce new legal cases or the writer’s comments in the biblical texts.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, NU was found in other textual functions, showing conclusion or consequence in Bible translations and profane genres. The main difference from the medieval textual functions is that whereas the initial NU was used for introducing something, the conclusive NU refers backwards, creating a connection with an earlier utterance or action. The function and the

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<sup>11</sup>The initial concessive *nu* is probably a shortened form of *nog* ‘sure’.

syntax of NU go hand in hand, as shown by the conclusive NU, which is never placed initially but occurs medially in main clauses or after the subordinator in subordinate clauses.

The first examples of pragmatic use occur in 17<sup>th</sup>-century plays. NU does not add anything to the propositional content but retains something of the textual NU's tendency to point backwards. This is shown in different ways, as responsiveness in conversations, reactive utterances in letter-writing or as a reference to something that has already been said. In medial or final clauses, NU can also have metapragmatic or parenthetical functions which, besides tying back to earlier discourse, organize the discourse or signal a parenthesis.

In contemporary Sweden-Swedish, the use of the non-temporal NU is rare and highly conventionalized. However, in Finland-Swedish, NU is still used frequently in several functions. The usage in Finland can be described as archaic, maintaining functions that were frequent in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The thousand-year-old language contact with Finnish is clearly reflected in the use of NU, as in many other lexical aspects. The shared speech community with Finnish has kept the same functions alive in Finland-Swedish and Finnish.

The development of NU can be described as a grammaticalization process that changes a temporal adverb into a pragmatic particle through decategorialization. The process is gradual, starting with textual functions during the Old Swedish period and introducing pragmatic ones later on. The changes in the use of NU can be described both in terms of a development towards more abstract meanings but also as changes towards more subjective ones. The semantic and pragmatic changes can be seen as motivated by conversational inferences caused by the temporal NU, which bypointing to the *origo* can develop a reference backward or forward in certain contexts.

The earliest text-structuring NU that introduces new topics in a text represents a semantic development from the temporal meaning towards a more abstract one, still referring to things to come. The later conclusive/consequential NU reintroduces or refers back to something that the readers/listeners share or that the writer has written previously. The different pragmatic functions also share some kind of a reference backwards, shown in their responsiveness. In present-day Finland-Swedish, the pragmatic NU often shows the speaker's questioning or mitigating stance towards something that s/he says, marking the utterances as parenthetical or rhetorical. The development from one function to another can also be seen in the syntactic position of NU, which is tied up with its various functions. One finding of this paper is the development of the non-canonical position of the conclusive NU, still used in contemporary Swedish, but not mentioned in any grammars.

The analysis in this paper leaves at least two questions open. One concerns the character of the historical data and the other the process of grammaticalization. Given the lack of historical



spoken material, it is difficult to know when and how the present-day non-temporal uses of NU began to develop. Although our analysis makes use of historical plays, these cannot be compared with authentic conversations. Another question is why the grammaticalization process seems to have come to an end during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The pragmatic NU has disappeared from written Swedish and from the spoken Sweden-Swedish vernacular. In present-day Sweden-Swedish, the gradually disappearing pragmatic functions of NU have been taken over by other pragmatic particles such as *så* ‘so’ and *då* ‘then’. An explanation might be the greater impact that written Swedish has had on spoken language. Another could be the strong position of the temporal adverb *nu*, which has remained unchanged during the history of Swedish.

### Transcription and glossing symbols

(.)	pause
(2.3)	silences timed in tenths of a second
fo:	lengthening of the sound
#nå:#	creaky voice
*jå*	laughing
(hh)	audible inhalation
@ÄÄH@	altered voice quality
((Laughs))	comment by the authors
<i>storm</i>	emphasis
↓	fall in pitch

ADJ	adjective
ART	article
COMP	comparative
CONJ	conjunction
DAT	dative
DET	determinative
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
GEN	genitive case
IMP	imperative
INF	infinitive
NEG	negative particle
OBJ	object
PART	participle
PASS	passive
PAST	past
PERF	perfect
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PREP	preposition

PRET	preterite
PRON	pronoun
PRT	particle
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
SBJV	subjunctive
SUBORD	subordinator
VB	verb

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